Boiled mammoraties who dare to read
Dead frogs that still keep on croaking—
Quadrupling time our daily bill,
To blister they shall result of bait.

READ ABOUT OUR MONSTER CHRISTMAS PUDDING FOURTH PAGE

Let Harry, Mary, Jack or Mat
Just log down everything we eat,
Then reckoned up in many days will be
And look the like of "Tranches."

THE CHICAGO LEDGER

A MODERN HOME WEEKLY OF ROMANCE, DEPARTMENTS AND EVENTS

VOLUME XXI. NUMBER 51. CHICAGO, ILL., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1893. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

A Christmas Reminiscence.

BY MARTIN C. CLOSSETT.

On its natural hip pipe and his spectacles lay,
On an old-spreading branch sang the rat and the dog
In the warmth of the bright flames that leaped in their play,
Many score and one year the great caddy log.
It was there, I remember, when wood-e and dare
Were the sports of the season, when I was a boy,
Then I felt I was safe and could laugh at no care
By my grandfather's fireplace, so cozy and
snug.

There were shadows that danced 'round it each
evening at night,
Which I feared, I weird, an fantastical all,
As they flitted with fun that were wonderously
light,
Ever mischievously over the rose-colored wall.
It was there, I remember, I wished I could be
In the whirl with that elfish, yet fairylike
band
And thought, could I join them, how merrily we,
Round my grandfather's fireplace would dance
the night through.

By the chimney he sat in his great easy chair,
And he told me the story of the long ago,
Of the days everything, he said, was every-
where,
And his big eyes I listened, and stared at him
so.
It was there, I remember, so odd he appeared,
That I was hard to believe he was every-
where
I thought he must always have worn a white
beard,
As I sat by his fireplace when I was a child.

In the rosiest corner corners of gold, so alight,
Which I filled with the thoughts of many a night,
Ah, nobody knew what a wonderful sight
Was my grandfather's fireplace in winter of
yore.

And many and many a time I've dreamed of it
since,
And never have ventured, and never have
known
That life could be empty, so cold, and so
dark,
But when the bright dreams of my childhood
have flown,
While, far from its hearth, many strangers I see
Be friends of the world of the toy land so
fair,
That gazing back fondly the warmer to me
Was my grandfather's fireplace in winter of
yore.

A Pathway of Joy.

Never lose courage; a quick heave
Here helps with you down to the grave.

Never lose trust in your fellows;
'Tis work not worry, that brightens our eyes.

Never lose hold; with aim in strong
Wanders but sadly through all life's way.

Never lose patience, for cause what will,
So value is gained from will or skill.

Never lose gladness, and then each hour
Will contain for you as a fragrant flower.

And if over you fall in your dearest plan,
Never lose faith in God or man.

Keep these things and life shall be
A pathway of joy and peace to thee.

The King's Mother Fell With the Spear Buried In Her Heart.

The White Queen

A Story of Chicago and Africa.

By H. E. SCOTT.

Author of "The Squire's Black Sheep," Etc.

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE WHITE QUEEN.

Lolo heard that cry, and for the first time, into the depths of the dark, fierce face there came a look of fear.

The blacks were kneeling some with their foreheads to the ground, others sitting and dancing, and all shouting: "Hail Lolo!"

Seated in an immense chair of ivory, with the head of a lion for a back, and a large panther skin for a footstool, the Captain's chair and the man were enough to attract attention.

The chair was of ivory. Two immense tusks pointing to the sky, and the back covered with skins of the leopard.

Seated in this chair, was Casada, the King of the Kolalas. Not that he was so, but that he could not walk, but must be carried from place to place, seated in his chair of state, which rested on a platform.

Fifteen stout negroes and captains were seated on mats and on the grass on either side of the King. They were all kneeling to him, and were guilties of some kind of kink and curl in keeping their entwined with lotus.

The chief of Casada, squatted on the ground, was a withered old negro, whose appearance must have been very old, for his wool was white as the fleece of a lamb. On right, was seated his favorite wife—Queen Nyoma.

Nyoma, was the mother of the King's children, and was the favorite wife of the King's sympathies.

Casada's eyes were pierced, and a couple of large gold rings were worn in each suspended there from white from around the neck of Nyoma. On the left of the King's instep, glittered necklaces of many colored beads.

Among the many queer ornaments worn of the King's family, but the gems that shone the brightest, were the two that hung from the necklaces around the necks white flesh of Lolo, and the barbaric display of Nyoma like rising eyes from small but exquisitely formed.

Lolo stood but three on the ground to the left of the colonel, and standing erect at either side of them, were the two princes of Lolo, the living idol of the Caprivis.

Hengo, and Bualla, both daughters of the King. They were never more eight of her, for the Queen had died when they were but a small child, and the King had never married again, as a second wife. Nyoma they held in the right hand, and their eyes were always on Lolo.

At the time that Captain Gregoire had entered that cry "Lolo" and fainted in his arms, the cry had not gone unheeded.

Lolo, by herself had heard it, and caught sight of the white faces and it had caused her to feel a faint, dizzy sensation, memories of the past; memories of the time when she was a child, and lived with her father and mother, came to her like a dream.

"Lolo, my child!" she had heard that voice.

The fleshy face of the white skinned woman, and the words, "I believe!" for so it must have been before she became an idiot, and the face of the man, with the long beard, and the kind eyes, who wandered at the Captain's falling into the arms of the white man, and the cry of "Lolo" that had for rumored from the young blacks.

Lolo, the child of the white man calling for the Queen of Africa, and the Queen and her subjects were saluted to the two white men.

Lolo had heard all this, and had been seized in her arms, and was saying as sensible as the Captain, who had fainted.

At this moment the Captain revived and said:

"I see it all now; my daughter Lolo was some how mingled with the blacks, and the two were arranged upon this coast, they were fifteen years ago. She was then four years of age; of course she can not remember her name, and they have made an idol of her. Lolo, my child, you are in the chair of state of the King, and but the King; those about him his family."

"Father!" cried the girl, "I remember you, and mother, and Anola, with some fairy tale, and

discovered to the direction to which she had come—the sloping path from sight. Gowns flowed down!

For a ripple broke the surface of the lake. It ought to be sure were its rocks and its shallows, its sandy bottom and its weeds.

Then—but—what again! Unless—and Concierge—

But—there's a head above the water now.

A long, long-haired head, as it is now a full inflowing of the tongue. "Help! Help!" and again Jeanette has dived in the centre of the main lake—a moment, and she has struck to his death.

Are you both well? No. A boat shoots forward, a long, dark, slender boat, and Jeanette, Concierge, this time half unconscious, is taken to the shore—and there is no notice and quickly pulled from it.

"The last to leave," she exclaimed.

"Don't, no! Don't go!" she exclaimed. "Don't leave me! Don't!"

"Jean," Madame Banderet, the wife of Baptiste, the Hazel of Trade, now? Who lives on Wabash avenue? Answer me, Jean!"

"The same, sir. Oh, John! John! where was you?"

"And you, John?"

"Valet, servant of the family, and residing at Major Banderet's. We were taken a last ride. I had been pulling the boat around, and when we came to the middle Mr. Baxton took the oars. I had been sitting in the stern, and I thought I would have changed places with him, but he was so much stronger than me he suddenly backward into the water. I was in the middle of the boat and some distance away, and John sprang up in the bow. I don't know any more, but that was all. I could not swim."

"Jean, I am sorry for you. I could not save Baxton, his friend

The Cookswain's Story.

You know that little finger who
Is called the "Cookswain?"
Because his locker was too small
To let him quit the service?
And so he had to stay and write
A, B, C to Z,
But, oh, he won't be a scholar
To his Captain's Wife Liz.

Woman scales! jaculiff Study Book,
A: Adam's fault was the Garden,
An' Eve's fault was the Snake.
Other fault was Adam-and,
An' Eve's fault was Eve,
Because he'd do anything
Because she'd make him believe.

When, just like that, a shell will fuse
A built man,
As soon as they eclipsed one side
Their other began.
Then just as they'd recover
Their breath and their wits,
Bang! a round of shot would
Hit the Captain's side slit.

He gives me many a swear,
He is rather up in arms,
But I'm used up in arms,
To his cursing in the dark,
He rubbed that heaven I see is both
Of us in heaven,
Yet I should confess that I should
Feel not even my with heaven.

The Captain came an' he was mad,
He was in a rage,
He said he'd have me court-martialled,
Yes, even into the brig!
But I'm not afraid of him,
As as I look my character,
Was high.

The Captain, sir, he just been drove,
He's off his head,
He's gone, he's got that dazed
Look in his eyes.
He's mad, he's mad, he's mad,
Mad, mad, mad!
Then I'll be mad, too,
The Captain's mad, too!

LANNA SEVAIN

Or,

The Hollow of the Oak.

By WILLIAM. E. CHISHOLM.

[Copyrighted by the author.]

CHAPTER XIV.—(Continued.)

CONSULTING WITH AN OLD FRIEND.

The judge was in the front porch when we came up. He was a tall, fine-looking man, with a full head of white hair and a long white beard. He was of a noble mien and well he might wear it proudly. His life had been a useful one. Everybody even he settled down had become a prominent citizen, and he had enjoyed the public confidence. He was a most hospitable, manly man, and his home was the abode of comfort, welfare and plenty. I will not attempt to describe the hospitality which made his house one of the most inviting in all the land.

At first the judge stared at me long and hard, but as soon as I spoke he arose and, with a hearty "Hello, my boy!" came to greeting, and did not announce his surprise in a light manner by any means.

"Why, bless my soul, he fairly shouted, "I thought you were dead, sir. Yes, sir, I declare I thought you were dead. Where have you been? Where have you been? Why, sir, I have been looking for you for months. Ever since the burning of Forest, at the medical college, well you see I have a number of letters addressed to you, to be. We can trust you not to tell us where you have been, and what you have been doing. But, my dear boy, I almost feared you had ceased to correspond for fame. What an awful thing that would be, to have you have reached so high!"

I was glad to see my genial visiting with me and consented at once, and spoiling something in my appearance and my manner, that I invited me to remain.

"Oh, certain me, Edgar, but just hasten home and tell your mother that you have taken on the great trouble-drone some notions, and that you will be home to-morrow. Tell her that I said so, and don't you go into the parch. There was a table in the house where Beverly Edgar used to sit. There were a box of cigars, a bottle of wine, I and a decanter of brandy. Those cigars were fine and solaces and comforts to me, and this which we had lately been using. He had probably intended to go home to see the household out from the inner rooms to the porch, but he had not done so. At any rate, instead of changing his course he had reached up here.

"Why, Judge," I said, in answer, "I am not going home to-night. I have a little business to attend to, and I shall not go there before to-morrow night."

"Oh, pardon me, Edgar, but just hasten home and tell your mother that you have taken on the great trouble-drone some notions, and that you will be home to-morrow. Tell her that I said so, and don't you go into the parch. There was a table in the house where Beverly Edgar used to sit. There were a box of cigars, a bottle of wine, I and a decanter of brandy. Those cigars were fine and solaces and comforts to me, and this which we had lately been using. He had probably intended to go home to see the household out from the inner rooms to the porch, but he had not done so. At any rate, instead of changing his course he had reached up here.

"Why, Judge," I said, in answer, "I am not going home to-night. I have a little business to attend to, and I shall not go there before to-morrow night."

The judge paused in rapid review over the situation, and I knew that he was puzzled.

It appeared from all he had been able to learn that I had been murdered, and that my body had been found in the ruins of the house of Forest, and that I had been burned to death. Of course he gave me all the news from Forest. He told me how the fire had been discovered and rushed from house to house, and how the flames had at last reached the house of

He was waiting for her; he had been waiting an hour and a half in a dusty suburban lane, with a row of big trees on one side and some eligible building sites on the other—and far away to the southwest the twinkling yellow lights of the city. It was not quite like a country lane, for it had a pavement and lamp-posts, but it was not a bad place for meeting, all the same; and further up, toward the cemetery, it was really quite rural, and almost pretty, especially in twilight. But twilight had long deepened into night, and still he waited. He loved her, and he was engaged to be married to her, with the complete disapproval of every reasonable person who had been consulted. And this half-clandestine meeting was tonight to take the place of the grudgingly-sanctioned weekly interview—because a certain rich uncle was visiting at her house, and her mother was not the woman to acknowledge to a moneyed uncle, who might "go off" any day, a match so deeply ineligible as hers with him.

So he waited for her, and the chill of an unusually severe evening entered into his bones.

The policeman passed him with but a surly response to his "good-night." The bicyclists went by him like gray ghosts with fog-horns, and it was nearly ten o'clock and she had not come.

He shrugged his shoulders and turned toward his lodgings. His road led him by her house—desirable, commodious, suburban—and he walked slowly as he neared it. She might even now be coming out. But she was not. There was no sign of life, no lights even in the windows. And her people were not early people.

He paused at the gate, wondering.

Then he noticed that the front door was open—wide open—and the street lamp shone a little way into the dark hall. There was something about all this that did not please him—that scared him a little, indeed. The house had a gloomy and deserted air. It was obviously impossible that it harbored a rich uncle. The old man must have left early. In which case—

He walked up the path and listened. No sign of life. He passed into the hall. There was no light anywhere. Where was everybody, and why was the front door open? There was no one in the drawing-room, the dining-room and the study nine feet by seven) were equally blank. Every one was out, evidently. But the unpleasant sense that he was, perhaps, not the first casual visitor to walk through that open door impelled him to look through the house before he went away and closed it after him. So he went up stairs, and at the door of the first bed-room he came to he struck a wax match, as he had done in the sitting-rooms. Even as he did so he felt that he was not alone. And he was prepared to see something, but for what he saw he was not prepared, for what he saw lay on the bed, in a white, loose gown—and it was his sweetheart, and its throat was cut from ear to ear. He does not know what happened then, nor how he got downstairs and into the street; but he got out somehow, and the policeman found him in a fit under the lamp-post at the corner of the street. He could not speak when they picked him up, and he passed the night in the police cells because the policeman had seen plenty of drunken men before, but never one in a fit.

The next morning he was better, though still very white and shaky. But the tale he told the Magistrate was convincing, and they sent a couple of constables with him to her house. There was no crowd about it, as he fancied there would be, and the blinds were not down. As he stood, in front of the door, it opened and she came out.

He held on to the door-post for support.

"She's all right, you see," said the policeman, who had found him under the lamp. "I told you you was drunk, but you would know best"—

When he was alone with her he told her—not all—for that would not bear telling, but how he had come into the commodious suburban house, and how he had found the door open and the lights out, and that he had been into that long back room facing the stairs, and had seen something—in even trying to hint at which he turned sick and broke down.

"But my dearest," she said, "I daresay the house was dark, for we were all at the theater with my uncle, and no doubt the door was open, for the servants will run out if they've left. But you could not have been in that room, because I locked it when I came away and the key was in my pocket. I dressed in a hurry and I left all my odds and ends lying about."

"I know," he said. "I saw a green scarf on a chair, and some long brown gloves, and a lot of hairpins and ribbons, and a prayer-book, and a lace handkerchief on the dressing-table. Why, I even noticed the calendar on the mantelpiece—October 21. At least, it couldn't be that, because this is May. And yet it was. Your calendar is at October 21, isn't it?"

"No, of course it isn't," she said, smiling rather anxiously; "but all the other things were just as you say. You must have had a dream, or a vision, or something."

He was a very ordinary, commonplace young man, and he did not believe in visions, but he never rested, day or night, till he got his sweetheart and her mother away from that commodious house, and settled them in a quite distant surburb. In the course of the removal he incidentally married her, and the mother went on living with them.

His nerves must have been a good bit shaken, because he was very queer for a long time, and was always inquiring if any one had taken the desirable suburban house, and when an old stock broker with a family took it he went the length of calling on the old gentleman, and imploring him, by all that he held dear, not to live in that fatal house.

"Why?" said the stock broker, not unnaturally.

And then he got so vague and confused between trying to tell why and trying not to tell why, that the stock broker showed him out and thanked his God he was not such a fool as to allow a lunatic to stand in the way of his taking that really remarkably cheap and desirable suburban residence.

Now the curious and quite inexplicable part of this story is that when she came down to breakfast on the morning of the twenty-second of October she found him looking like dead, with the morning paper in his hand. He caught hers—he could not speak, and pointed to the paper. And there she read that on the night of the twenty-first a young lady, the stock broker's daughter, had been found with her throat cut from ear to ear, on the bed in the long back bed-room facing the stairs of that desirable suburban house.

A College Girl's Revenge.

"They may talk about the college boys and their hazings and tricks, but for real genuine fun you can't beat the college girl," said a young freshman the other day. "Last year—you know the men's college is right near the seminary, and so they call on us every evening—the president made a new rule. He declared that we must dismiss our guests at nine thirty, and we decided that we would not do it. After a great deal of plotting and planning we hit upon a delightful plan, and it was a great success. The boys secured a big basket and two ropes and a pulley for us, and this we hid during the day and at night fastened to two great hooks on the sill of our study window. The boys sent up their cards in the basket, and then after inspecting them with a lantern to make sure they were not burglars we hauled them up. But one night the grave and dignified president caught us and planned a little surprise for us. He found one of the boys' cards in our rooms and placed it in the basket. It worked beautifully and we hauled him half way before anyone thought of using the lantern. Then Miss Flyaway held it out the window and took a peep at him. One glance at the spectacles and bald head was enough. It was lucky for that president that we did not let him fall to the ground in our horror and amazement, but we held on to the ropes until we decided what to do. We couldn't let him down again, he would only come up and catch us, and we couldn't drop him, bad as he was, and we certainly did not intend to help him carry out his plan by hauling him up, so we compromised by securing the ropes and letting him hang there in midair. He begged and implored to be let down, offered us any bribe we could wish for, and wasted more eloquence on us in that first hour than he did during his yearly lectures. But we had no visitors that night; he amused us and we wanted revenge, so we left him. He tried to jump, to climb down the wall and up on the rope, but failed in everything. At last he howled, yelled like an Indian till everyone in town was aroused and even the boys turned out to see the terror of their worst night-mares, crimson with rage, suspended in midair in a clothes basket."

Coon Hunting With Fireworks

An old hunter is responsible for this extraordinary yarn: "One of the most enjoyable nights I ever spent in the woods after coons was over in Illinois last fall. I think I have chased the old ring-tailed corn-destroyer about as often as anybody, and have sought him on all kinds of nights and days and seasons. I have trapped the coon, hunted him with dogs, shot him, and even gigged him. But when it comes right down to real fun, that beats a Fourth of July celebration all to pieces, coon hunting with Roman candles catches me every time.

"As I was saying, one night last fall when I was up the Illinois river duck-shooting, some of the boys proposed that we get old Bent Burleigh and his dogs, and spend the night in the bottoms after coons. Burleigh was a coon hunter from away back, knew just where to find them, and had the dogs that understood their business as well as Bent. We sent up to Burleigh's house, about a mile distant, and the old man was eager for the fray. He came down with his brindle dog Bark, and his black-and-tan hound Oreoide, and by seven o'clock four of us were floating down the river in the semi-darkness toward the mouth of Otter creek. The moon was just breaking through a cloud that hung along the east when we landed about a mile up the creek. The timber was not large, and there was not much underbrush in the bottom. On the south side of the creek there was a big cornfield, and the water at the stopping point was shallow, and numerous old logs were visible rising at different angles—just the place for coons to come in search of mussels and craw-fish. There had been a light shower that afternoon, leaving the ground moist, and scarcely a breath of air moved the branches. As we neared the leading place the dogs began sniffing, and would have barked had not Bent silenced them.

"'Here we be, boys,' said the old coon hunter, as we landed. 'Now, two on ye take yer guns, but carry 'em empty. Keep shells handy, and watch the ole man. He's goin' to show ye some fun like ye never saw 'afore. The woods is is just right, an' there's heaps o' coon aroun' in ,em tonight. Now, Bark, 'en you, Oreoide, git ter work.'

"The dogs, let loose, went scampering about among the timber. Suddenly the old hound made the woods echo with a yelp. Then Bark answered the call, and the music began. Inside of ten minutes after landing Burleigh said: 'They've got him, boys. Come on;' and with long strides the old man made for the place where the bark and the bay mingled. On a good sized sycamore were the coons; Burleigh cautioned the dogs 'ter watch out,' and then took from a package which he had been carrying, wrapped in a piece of oilcloth, a Roman candle.

"What in the world are you going to do with that, old man?" I asked.

"'Well, boys, wat de ye think uv my style uv shakin' coons outen the trees? beats climbin' all holler, don't it? Now, I've shown ye how ter do it; jist handle the fireworks an' I'll keep the dogs in line.' The dead coons were placed in the boat, and away we went; and in a circuit of about one mile three more ringtails were bombarded from their perches in the trees and killed by the dogs. Then we concluded to start for camp. On the way back a big owl who was hooting in a tree made a fine mark for our Roman candles. When one was lighted the old fellow seemed to take a great interest in it, but when one of the balls flashed close to his head it seemed to blind him, and he lost his bearings, flew against the trunk of a tree, and fell to the ground only to be grabbed up by the dogs.

"I tell you we had a grand night of it! Going back on the boat we used up our remaining candles, popping them at inquisitive stock that was loitering along the creek, and you ought to see the cattle and hogs run when our fireworks popped in their direction. I have never had an opportunity to go after coons since that night, but I hope to be in a few days now, and I advise all who enjoy the sport never to go out coon hunting, or opossum, either, without a dozen, at least, of from five to fifteen-ball Roman candles. The pyrotechnic effects in the timber is a novel and interesting sight in itself, but when it comes to make a coon or 'possum let go his hold on a limb and come down, the best climbing darkey ain't in it."

Ole Bull as a Child.

From his earliest childhood Ole Bull was exceedingly sensitive to music. His uncle, who belonged to a quartet club, used, when playing on the violincello, to put the little fellow in the empty case and keep him there until his nervous excitement made it impossible for him to remain.

In spite of this excitement he narrowly observed all that the players did; he knew the sound of the notes long before he could name them, and when at the age of five his uncle made him the proud possessor of a little sort of a violin, which he received with kisses and embraces, to everyone's amazement he played upon it at once with remarkable correctness.

His next violin was given to him at his earnest solicitation two or three years afterward by his father. He could not sleep for thinking of it. When he heard his father and mother drawing the deep breath of sleep he rose and lighted a candle and tiptoed to the room where his dear violin lay, in order to open the case for one delighted look. "The violin was so red," said he, as Mrs. Child reported, "and the pretty pearl screws did smile at me so! I pinched the strings just a little with my fingers. It smiled at me ever more and more. I took up the bow and looked at it. It said to me that it would be pleasant to try it across the strings. So I did try it—just a very, very little. And it did sing to me so sweetly! Then I did creep farther away from the bed-room. At first I did play very softly. I made very, very little noise. But presently I did begin a capriccio which I like very much, and it did go ever louder and louder, and I forgot that it is midnight and everybody asleep.

"Presently I hear something go crack! And the moment I feel my father's whip across my shoulders. My little red violin dropped on the floor and was broken. I weep very much for it, but it did no good. They did have a doctor for it the next day, but it never recovered its health."

His father had meant that he should be a clergyman, and in due time the boy was placed at the University of Gottingen. But it was quite useless—study or not, music would get the upper hand.

The only known species of grass-eating turtle in the world thrives on the Mojave desert, in California.

The ancient inhabitants of the Esther islands averaged twelve feet in height.

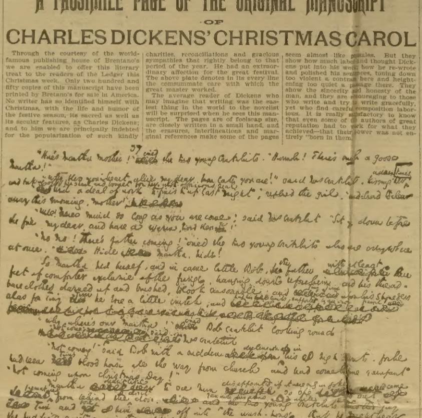
A FACSIMILE PAGE OF THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

OF

CHARLES DICKENS' CHRISTMAS CAROL

Through the courtesy of the world-famous publishing house of Brentano's we are enabled to offer this literary treat to the readers of the Ledger this Christmas week. Only two hundred and fifty copies of this manuscript have been printed by Bretano's for sale in America. No writer has so identified himself with Christmas, with the life and humor of the festive season, its sacred as well as its secular features, as Charles Dickens; and to him we are principally indebted for the popularization of such kindly charities, reconciliations and gracious sympathies that rightly belong to that period of the year. He had an extraordinary affection for the great festival. The above plate denotes in its every line the consummate care with which the great master worked.

The average reader of Dickens who may imagine that writing was the easiest thing in the world to the novelist will be surprised when he sees this manuscript. The pages are of foolscap size, are closely written in a small hand, and the erasures, interlineations and marginal references make some of the pages seem almost like puzzles. But they show how much labor and thought Dickens put into his work; how he re-wrote and polished his sentences, toning down too violent a contrast here and heightening too quiet a passage there. They show the sincerity and honesty of the man, and they are encouraging to those who write and try to write gracefully, yet who find careful composition laborious. It is really satisfactory to know that even some of the great authors of great reputation had to work for what they achieved—that their power was not entirely "born in them."



TRANSLATION OF THE 37TH PAGE.

"How's Martha, mother?" cried the two young Cratchits. "Hurrah! There's such a goose Martha!"

"Why, bless my heart alive my dear, how late you are," said Mrs. Cratchit, kissing her a dozen times, and taking off her shawl and bonnet for her with officious zeal.

"We'd a deal of work to finish up last night," replied the girl, "and had to clear away this morning, mother!"

"Well, never mind so long as you are come," said Mrs. Cratchit. "Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!"

"No, no! There's father coming!" cried the two young Cratchits who were everywhere at once. "Hide Martha, hide!"

So Martha hid herself, and in came little Bob, the father, with at least three feet of comforter, exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him, and his threadbare clothes darned up and brushed, to look seasonable, and Tiny Tim upon his shoulder. Alas for Tiny Tim he bore a little crutch; and had his limbs supported by an iron frame.

"Why, where's our Martha?" cried Bob Cratchit looking round.

"Not come," said Mrs. Cratchit.

"Not coming!" said Bob with a sudden delusion in his high spirits—for he had been Tim's blooded horse all the way from church and had come home rampant. "Not coming upon Christmas Day!"

Martha didn't like to see him disappointed, if it were only a joke; so she came out prematurely from behind the closet door, and ran into his arms, while the two young Cratchits bustled Tiny Tim, and bore him off into the wash-house, that he might hear the pudding singing in the copper.

"And how did little Tim behave?" asked Mrs. Cratchit, when she had rallied Bob on his credulity, and Bob had hugged his daughter to his heart's content.

"As good as gold," said Bob, "and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember upon Christmas day, who made lame beggars walk, and blind men see.

Bob's voice was tremulous when he told them this, and trembled more when he said that Tiny Tim was growing strong and hearty.

His active little crutch was heard upon the floor, and back came Tiny Tim before another word was spoken, escorted by his brother and sister to his stool beside the fire; and while Bob turning up his cuffs—as if, poor fellow, they were capable of being made more respectable—compounded some hot mixture in a jug with gin and lemons, and stirred it round and round and put it on the hot stove to simmer; Master Peter, and the ubiquitous young Cratchits went to fetch the goose, with which they soon returned in High Procession.

"Ouida" Dissected.

Probably no woman writer of fiction of recent times has created more food for speculation and gossip than Louise de la Ramee, well known by her nom de plume of "Ouida."

From some of her books, such as "Moths" and "Puck," the idea has gone abroad that she herself is of the type which loves to portray—an impossible creature, half adventuress, half angel, and startlingly beautiful. The sort of woman one doesn't care to have as a relative and yet would be glad to meet on an ocean steamer or any other place where ennui might be of the party.

To her innumerable readers it may be a relief to know that Ouida does not at all fit the popular idea of herself.

To begin with, she is a decidedly plain-looking woman of about fifty, who over-dresses shockingly.

Any photographs of her are extremely rare, for she declares that she lends herself so unwillingly to the artist that only the hardest lines in her face come out on the developing plate; and these she generally refuses to have perpetuated.

There is a magnetism in her clear, cold eye that defies both the photographer's lens and the writer's pen, and that gives an attraction not to be gainsaid.

Any sunshiny afternoon in Florence she may be seen driving along the Lung d'Arno dressed in an orange-colored batiste profusely trimmed with lace. About her shoulders is usually thrown a black guipure mantilla oddly drawn up about the neck and falling far over the wrists and hands. On her flowing, bleached, untidy mass of hair rests a broad-brimmed flat of tulle and lace through whose open-work brim grotesque shadows are thrown upon her face. The background to this startling make-up is a brougham of latest design, tufted in bright turquois blue satin.

Three huge Spitz dogs are her constant companions on these drives; and as she proceeds through the streets more than one old Florentine has something to tell of her extravagances and peculiarities. Laces and stilettos are her passion, and of both she has a valuable collection. Laces as filmy as cobwebs—rare old-point in all its varieties that turn connoisseurs green with envy—are stored in magnificent caskets. In her case of stilettos those of Beatrice Cenci and Lucrezia Borgia are said to be guarded along with the dangerous jeweled play-things of less celebrated beauties, and cheek by jowl with them are old poniards rusty with the blood of more than one brigand chief.

It is surely a curious disposition that rejoices in guarding the dainty furbelows of womanhood and the death-dealing daggers of the fierce historic old Italians.

But Ouida's absorbing passion is her fondness for dogs of every size and breed.

In the spacious gardens about her home, Palazzo Pantiacchi, not less than a dozen slabs of purest Carrara, or blood-red porphyry mark the last resting-places of as many of her canine friends.

To her dogs, not to human beings, has Ouida's life been given. Into their ears have been poured embryo tales starting in their development and denouncement.

Her greatest aversion is the interviewer. He is her bete noire. To any person known to be such her powdered flunky invariably refuses admission. In cases of a powerful appeal she will sometimes accord, in a cramped Italian hand, written replies to written questions.

Ouida's nom de plume, with its strange orthography, has provoked any amount of curiosity as to its origin. The fact that a tiny prattler of whom Mademoiselle de la Ramee was exceedingly fond had for years lispingly corrupted her given name, "Louise," into "Weeda."

In eighteen sixty-one, when the writer was casting about for a pseudonym to affix to her first story, "Idalia," she was suddenly inspired to hiding her identity behind the old-time pet name, for Mademoiselle de la Ramee mortally dreded the criticisms of the fashionable world, in which she then was moving, far more than the slings and arrows of literary critics.

These early dreads have long been swept away. In America Ouida's books have a sale of twenty-five thousand volumes a year. On the continent she is read enormously—her fantastic and exaggerated ideas of vice finding champions in all circles.

Ouida certainly anticipated Zola in her vivid dissection of the souls of men who abandon themselves to pleasure.

A Fable for Hard Times.

Once upon a time two frogs who had been living in comfort and ease in a cool pool of water were accidentally scooped up by a pious milkman in a bucket of water, which he poured into his can in order to give his milk more body and thereby increase his revenue. The frogs were astonished to find themselves in an unknown element, in which it was not possible to support life, and they had to kick vigorously in order to keep their heads above the milk. One of them, being disheartened by being shut up in the dark element entirely new to him, said: "Let's give it up and go to the bottom. It's no use kicking any longer." The other said: "Oh, no. Let's keep kicking as long as we can and see what the outcome will be. Maybe things will change presently." So one frog gave up and went to the bottom. The other kept kicking, and when the pious milkman got to town and opened his can, behold! the frog had kicked out a lump of butter large enough to float him, and he was sitting on it very comfortably.

Moral—In hard times never give up but keep kicking.

An Obliging Guest.

Almost before dawn one morning last fall a guest at one of the large World's Fair hotels appeared as if by magic before the half-opened eyes of the drowsy night clerk. The guest was tall and gaunt, his attire was rural, his speech nasal, and his chin beard like unto that of the pictorial Uncle Sam.

He rubbed his hands and said, "Good morning," with the air of a man who hoped he was doing right, but was not quite sure of it. The clerk responded as most hotel clerks would under like circumstances.

"Yew folks get up kinder late," the guest continued, still ill at ease. "Me and my wife 'av be'n up quite a piece. She's made the bed and dusted the room, and I thought I'd ask ye where tew throw the wash-water."

They Cannot Sleep.

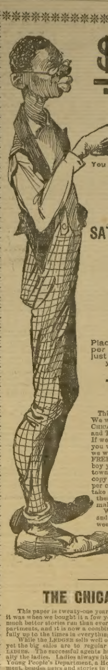
It is said that there are forty thousand people in Chicago who are making a vigorous kick against the fog horns which the light-house board has erected at the entrance of Chicago's harbor. These horns are nothing more nor less than gigantic steam whistles, which, under favorable conditions, can be heard for a distance of twenty-four miles. They are arranged to sound automatically for a period of five seconds every half minute, and make such a tremendous racket that on foggy nights nobody being anywhere near the lake shore can sleep. When it was proposed to erect them many vigorous protests were made, but without avail. The light-house authorities say that when people get used to it they will not mind the noise.

Women in Greece.

Women are not held to be of much account in Greece. When a father counts his children he does not include the females. In this country women do the farm work and they never sit at a table with guests. They have inclosures in the churches and seldom are seen on the streets; their occupations and industries are menial, and, in fact, the trail of the Turkish serpent is over them still. Queen Olga is at the head of a society for the advancement of women. In this school four hundred and fifty females are being taught lacemaking and embroidery. They pay four cents a day and also get their dinner, and their work is sold for them by the society.

About Emile Zola.

A new life of Emile Zola says he always writes four printed pages in the Charpentier edition of his novels every day. He never writes less, and he never writes more, stopping at the end of the fourth page, even if he is in the middle of a sentence. He has done this for years, with a devotion to routine which makes Anthony Trollope seem like a fitful, spasmodic worker.



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THE SCHEME.

This is a copy of THE CHICAGO LEDGER. We want a boy in every town to sell THE CHICAGO LEDGER Wednesday or Saturday, and THE SATURDAY BLADE every Saturday. If we have no boy in your place, and if you will get us a boy to sell the papers, we will instruct him TO GIVE YOU A COPY FREE OF EACH as long as he or any other boy you get acts as our agent in your town. The papers are sold at 5 cents per copy by the boy, and he remits us 3 cents per copy for each paper he sells, and we take back all the papers he don't sell, therefore the boy takes no risk and makes 2 cents on each paper he sells.

We are selling in over 18,000 towns and printing over 500,000 copies per week. We push the sale of our papers on the same plan adopted by the daily papers. We leave politics and religion alone and make large, seven-column, eight-page, illustrated family papers, filled with solid reading matter.

THE CHICAGO LEDGER.

This paper is twenty-one years old. It is now nearly double the size it was when we bought it a few years ago, and while there are more and much better stories run than ever before, we have added several new departments, and it is now a combined STORY AND FAMILY PAPER, and is fully up to the times in everything.

While the LEDGER sells well on the streets and in stores and offices, yet the big sales are to regular customers among the FAMILIES and LADIES. The successful agents hustle the PRIVATE HOUSES, and especially the ladies. Ladies always like continued stories. Then there is a Young People's Department, a Home Department, and Fashion Department, besides news and stories in the LEDGER which make it a first-class FAMILY paper in every way. Any one who reads one copy of it will always want the next and will NEVER MISS AN ISSUE. The agent should always work for a big list of REGULAR CUSTOMERS.

THE SATURDAY BLADE.

This paper is the greatest newspaper wonder of the age. In five years it has a circulation of over 300,000 copies per week. The GREATEST SENSATIONS and the MOST MARVELOUS EVENTS are written up in the best style and fully illustrated. We receive thousands of complimentary letters every week and the newsboys and agents who handle it are MAKING MONEY FAST SELLING IT.

The BLADE sells easily, but the boys who hustle the streets, factories, stores, offices, farmers, railroads and everybody sell most. There is many a man who would not dare to go home on Saturday evening to his wife unless he brought her THE SATURDAY BLADE OR LEDGER as a "peace maker." The farmers living way back in the country, when they can't go to town themselves on Saturday, watch for any neighbor going and call out: "Hello, there, bring me THE SATURDAY BLADE."

"HARD TIMES COME AGAIN."

Look our papers over carefully and you will see that any boy or girl can sell them. A boy or girl that wants to earn money, we find, sells the most papers, and will stick to it until they get up a good trade.

An agent can make from $1.00 to $10.00 every week, and can do this without interfering with school or other work, and help out these hard times.

The packages of papers are always mailed (no difference where the town is) so that the Blade reaches our agents late Friday evening, or early Saturday morning, and the Ledger Tuesday evening.

Instructions to Agents.

Send 3 cents for each paper sold, in two cent stamps for any amount under $1. Over $1, send Postal Note, Money Order, or Express Order.

The Boys that stick to it are selling more papers every week.

Some boys get discouraged because they have poor luck one week and quit. They are sorry for it after some other boy gets the agency and gets up a good trade and has a good paying business.

Report Saturday or Monday. Be sure to report and remit Saturday if you sell out; Monday morning anyhow. Don't put it off. We must hear from you so we shall know how many to print for you the next week.

Report for the Blade and Ledger both at one time and on the same blank and in the same envelope, addressed to The Saturday Blade. If you do not report on Saturday we will not know whether you want more or less papers the next week, and you may be disappointed. If you do not report weekly we will not send any more papers.

Unsold Papers keep clean until called for, each week by itself, unless otherwise ordered.

Cut This Out, Fill Up and Mail Us.

______189__

I agree to act from date as the agent for the Chicago Ledger on Wednesday or Saturday, and Chicago Saturday Blade on Saturday and agree to try to sell them on the streets, in factories, private houses, to ladies, to farmers and others at 5 cents a copy; and that I will report every Saturday or Monday on blanks to be furnished me, and remit 3 cents for each copy I sell or deliver to subscribers and keep all undelivered copies until called for.

Name________

Address________

State________

How many papers first time________

By whom appointed________